

Tasmanian Field Naturalists' Club (TFNC)

BULLETIN NO. 261

SUPPLEMENT TO THE "TASMANIAN NATURALIST"

January 1991

The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club is devoted to the study of all forms of Natural History, and is comprised of both experts and beginners. We cover a wide variety of topics, and we support conservation. Meetings are held on the first Thursday of every month, except January, in the Life Sciences Building at the University of Tasmania at 7.45 p.m. Outings are usually held the following weekend, meeting outside the main entrance to the Museum, Macquarie Street.

The Club's address is GPO Box 68A, Hobart, 7001 and the Secretary is Helen Davidson, phone 23 7015.

PROGRAMME

- Thurs. Feb. 7th 8.00p.m. The noted English author and speaker David Lang will give a public lecture entitled "Round Britain Flower Race" in the University Life Sciences Lecture Theatre. He will discuss slides of British orchids and wildflowers and their habitats. Please come and bring your friends. There will be no TFNC business meeting, but supper will be served afterwards.
- Sat. Feb. 9th 10.00a.m. Elizabeth Turner from the Tasmanian Museum will accompany us to Roches Beach (between Lauderdale and Seven Mile Beach) to search for shells and identify them using Margaret Richmond's book "Tasmanian Seashells Common to other Australian States". Margaret made 50 searches for shells at this beach and we should find plenty no matter what the weather - but let's hope it is a pleasant, sunny day!
- Thurs. March 7th 7.45p.m. Sharp. Prior to the President's address and AGM there will be a special meeting to consider the proposed rule changes and incorporation of the club. As well as the election of the 1991/92 committee, presentation of the Secretary's Report and Financial Report, etc, we will need to consider the business for the past three months, so this will be a very vital meeting. PLEASE ATTEND. The club can't function without you!
- March 8th, 9th, 10th. A GREAT WEEKEND CAMP AT THE LAUNCESTON FNC PROPERTY, THE JOHN SKEMP FIELD CENTRE. See full information over the page.
- March 15th to 17th FEDERATION OF FIELD NATURALISTS CLUBS WEEKEND CAMP, KALOMA SCOUT LODGE, WYNYARD. See full information over the page.
- Thurs. April 4th 7.45p.m. Dr. Max Banks will present a talk entitled "A Scenic Inheritance from the Past" on the geology of the Eaglehawk Neck area.
- Sat. April 6th 10.00a.m. Dr. Banks will lead us on an outing to the Eaglehawk Neck area to look at the geology discussed at Thursday's meeting. For further information contact Don Hird 34 4293.

MEMBERSHIP FEE REMINDER: Fees fell due on the 1st January 1991. The rates are:

ADULTS:.....\$15.00	FAMILIES:.....\$18.00	Note: Members automatically receive the journal and bulletins.
STUDENTS, PENSIONERS, HEALTH CARD HOLDERS:.....\$12.00		

Subscriptions the "Tasmanian Naturalist":

AUSTRALIA: INDIVIDUALS:.....\$12.00	INSTITUTIONS:.....\$16.00
OVERSEAS: INDIVIDUALS:.....\$14.00	INSTITUTIONS:.....\$18.00

This includes postage by surface mail (airmail is extra).

PLEASE LET THE TREASURER HAVE YOUR PAYMENT NOW FOR 1991

Don't forget about the TFNC Stall at the Fern Tree Festival on Saturday 23rd. February.

TFNC STALL AT FERN TREE FESTIVAL SATURDAY 23RD FEBRUARY: Mem and Joyce Tagg have again kindly offered to run a stall at the Festival to aid club funds and would like support from other members in the form of donations of items for sale and also volunteers to put in some time behind the counter. Suitable items such as jam, cakes, sweets, produce, plants, books, handcrafts, etc. can be brought to the stall from 10 a.m. onwards or to Mem prior to Saturday. Please phone 39 1117 if you can assist. The Festival is held at Stephenson's Place, Fern Tree (near the kindergarten and shop). Last year's stall was very successful - please give your support again whilst enjoying a great day.

***** POST-POWER TILL SUNDAY 17th MARCH *****

JOHN SKEMP FIELD CENTRE WEEKEND: 8th, 9th and 10th March 1991. Hosted by LFNC at their property, Skemps. Leaders from the LFNC will be Mary Cameron and Jeff Martin. Directions - take Tasman Highway from Launceston towards Scottsdale. Turn left just after a sharp right-hand bend at Targa onto the C828 (Targa Hill Road). After 2km at the top of the hill turn right onto the Old Scottsdale Road (marked Myrtle Bank Road on Tasmap). Skemps is on the right-hand very soon. It is located near Myrtle Bank (GR 297281) marked on the St Patricks Tasmap.

Bring sleeping bags, cutlery and food. Accommodation is two 8-person bunk rooms and there is plenty of room for camping outside.

Plan to arrive at Skemps on Friday afternoon or on Saturday morning by 9.30 a.m. Phone bookings with Phil Collier 29 6597 (home).

FEDERATION OF FIELD NATURALISTS CLUBS WEEKEND CAMP: The Burnie FNC will be hosting the camp to be held at the Kaloma Scout Lodge, Reservoir Drive, Wynyard from Friday 15th March to Sunday 17th March 1991. The costs will be \$5 per night for adults and \$4 per night for children, plus about \$5 per person or \$8 per family to cover the cost of the bus excursion to the Hellyer Mine and Eucalypt Forests etc. on Saturday.

On Saturday evening there will be a catered dinner (\$10 per adult and \$4.50 per child) followed by speleologist David Heap's talk entitled "Caving in Tasmania and Elsewhere".

The accommodation and facilities at the camp are very good, so you will only need to bring sleeping bags etc, personal clothing and toiletry items, and food for your breakfasts and lunches.

For further information on the program, camp location (map available), registration, etc. please contact Helen (23 7015) or Phil (29 6597) before the 1st March.

TFNC MAMMAL SURVEY GROUP: Mammal Survey Groups have been established in several parts of Australia and have contributed significantly to knowledge of faunal distributions in particular, as well as to mammal biology generally.

Recently two members were granted Parks and Wildlife permits to trap and release mammals for the above purposes. Other techniques available include general and spotlight observation, tracks and signs identification and hair sampling. We aim to operate informally on the weekend of the fortnight after monthly excursions. Initially we will work on a survey of Mt Wellington Range and of selected areas such as Chauncy Vale and possible "Glenelg".

See Don Hird or Andrew Weinart at meetings for details.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: The forthcoming annual general meeting and special meeting of the club on 7th March is more significant than usual. At the special meeting we will be discussing two resolutions which will introduce a new set of rules for the club suitable for incorporation and authorise the committee to cause the club to become incorporated. Why become incorporated? There are several reasons, not least of which is that an incorporated club is viewed as a "proper" organisation by government. In return for minimal government supervision, mostly of the club's financial affairs, we are able to apply for government grants. We have already done this for our proposed butterfly book with an indication that we are pursuing incorporation. Another reason for becoming incorporated is that the club becomes a legal entity separate from a collection of individual members. This means that in the possible event of the club being successfully sued, incorporation will afford protection for individual member's assets.

On the negative side is a once-off fee of about \$150 when we apply for incorporation and an annual expense of about \$50. Our current auditor Peter Franklin, will be able to continue auditing our books so this will not lead to additional expense. It should

A FEW THOUGHTS FROM DAVID LANG

The attraction of Tasmania for a British botanist is simply explained - 145 species of orchids compared to our 50 - add to that the birds, animals and scenery, and I need no encouragement to return for a second visit!

The British countryside as we see it now is the result of more than 5000 years of steadily intensifying human activity. We have no true wilderness. We lost our forests in the 15th century, while land enclosure, draining of wetlands and the extensive grazing of cattle and sheep have created the landscape we now enjoy. However, we are now experiencing a downturn in agricultural activity on a massive scale for political reasons, and things will change. Pollution in many forms, not least the loss of land to an expanding road system, puts additional strain on the countryside, all at a time when there is increasing pressure to use land for leisure pursuits.

Our only hope is in conservation and management, and this requires data on wildlife so that balanced decisions can be made. We possess a government-funded team of environmental scientists, but much of the information and record keeping rests with a complex network of county naturalists, trusts and natural history societies. It is no longer sensible to work on one's own, for all must pool their information and expertise, so that objections to developmental changes can be based soundly on good data. Government ministers require facts on which to make decision - not just feelings, however strong!

We are also seeing the loss of sites for rare plants, birds and animals by "development" in all its forms. National parks, and sites of scientific interest, are not as safe as we had assumed, and conservation interests are called upon to fight damaging changes on a scale we had never envisaged. We simply cannot afford to fight every case, so must lose some and concentrate on those we must not lose.

You in Tasmania are very fortunate that, for historical reasons, you still possess areas of true wilderness, and a stunning diversity of wildflowers and animals. Inevitably these treasures are subject to threats from agriculture, forestry, mineral extraction and tourism. It is for you to decide what you value, and what should be developed or extracted for the benefit of the state. You can probably understand now why a British naturalist looks at your country as being this side of Paradise, but a fragile paradise you could so easily lose.

In Britain, we have found it necessary to create "honeypot areas" to cope with the increased public interest in wildlife and the countryside. These serve to take the pressure off more sensitive sites. Even then it is necessary to prohibit public access to places where there are rare or endangered plants and animals, at the risk of being accused of elitism. It seems hard to create public interest in something rare or beautiful, and then stop enthusiasts from seeing it.

Tasmania still enjoys relatively large areas of unspoiled wildland. The temptation to use it to make the fast buck must be resisted. All over the world we are seeing an upsurge of interest in natural history tours and holidays, and these can be the means whereby a country can earn hard foreign currency without destroying any of its assets. Tasmania already possesses a sound framework of state wildlife expertise, and there is no doubting the value of the input from amateur naturalists in all branches of the science. In Britain we have found the need to forego old rivalries and pool our resources in the cause of conservation, or we shall all end up the poorer. Above all you need records and sound facts to present cases for conservation. Everyone can contribute something, and every little bit adds up to an impressive whole. The role of organisations such as the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club is of the utmost importance.

I trust that my children and grandchildren will come in their turn, and find the Tasmania of the future still the unique and attractive place it is today!


David C. Lang,
20 Ferraers Road,
Lewes. Sussex. U.K.

be noted that we are saving about \$500 per year on the new arrangements for setting up the "Naturalist" for publication so these costs are easily covered.

At its meeting on 19th November the committee overwhelmingly carried a motion of intention to become incorporated, and the general meeting on 6th December gave a strong indication of support. Please come to the special meeting and AGM on 7th March and support this move to modernise our club. The other main business of the AGM is the election of a new committee. One significant resignation this year is our secretary Helen Davidson. She has undertaken an enormous amount of the work which will hopefully be shared out amongst the committee more evenly in future. Of course all positions are up for re-election so please consider whether you can spare a little time at about six committee meetings over 12 months and help run this worthwhile club.

Let me close by reminding you all of our extra special meeting on 7th February. This is not a special meeting for heavy business, in fact, there will be NO business! It is an illustrated lecture by British botanist David Lang. Please make every effort to attend and bring your friends along too.

Phil Collier



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Please canvas amongst members for nominations for committee positions and send completed forms to the secretary before the AGM. The ex-officio positions of Librarian and Editor of the "Tasmanian Naturalist" do not require nomination.

TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB - NOMINATION FORM

I hereby propose _____

for the position of _____

(President, 2x Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, 4x Committee Member)

Proposer _____

Seconder _____

I agree to stand for the above position.

(Nominee's signature)

(Date)